

Sermon from the May 2017 issue of “Konkokyo-ho: Ametsuchi”

Posted on 2018/02/16

The Konko Faith is our Treasure

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(From the May 2017 issue)



Our Encounter with the Konko Faith

I was introduced to the Konko Faith about 55 years ago. My father passed away when I was still little. My mother and four of us, all daughters, lost our only male family member. Our family ties with relatives grew weaker as years went by, and before we knew it, we grew distant from one another. My mother fell ill due to anxiety over this, and one day we rushed her to a hospital, where she was admitted. The doctor who examined her told us, “Your mother is suffering from heart failure, and there’s nothing we can do for her.” I still remember those words very well. We were stunned.

One day we were allowed to take Mother out for a day trip as a family. Five of us went out to dine together. We enjoyed an *udon* noodle dish called “*nabeyaki udon*,” which was considered a special feast in those days. We didn’t go straight back to the hospital after leaving the restaurant. Our mother wanted to take us to the sea. There, she wrapped her waist cord belt around our waists, while saying to us, “Sorry, dear. I’m very sorry...” My mother was inconsolable and her tears would not stop. I still recall this event vividly. Much later, my mother confessed that she had been intending to kill herself, taking all of us with her. According to my mother, she wasn’t “brave” enough to complete her intention. She returned to the hospital, and we, to our home.

A kind neighbor of ours who happened to be a member of Konko Church of Iyoshi, visited my mother at the hospital. She invited my mother to her church, saying, “Why don’t you come over to our church when you are well again?” Feeling extremely desperate, my

mother made up her mind to go to the Konko church. The church was but 100 meters away from the hospital, yet too weak to walk, she took a taxi.

My mother went into the church's worship hall and cried out to the minister sitting at the *Okekkai*, the Mediation seat, "Please save me!" She continued, "My life in this world will soon come to an end. But please protect my children's lives and wellbeing, at all cost." The minister sitting there was the church's Head Minister, and he told my mother, "Go to the backyard and cut the firewood outside with an ax." My mother who always wore an oxygen inhaler in the hospital was without this breathing aid, outside the hospital. She answered, "I'm afraid I cannot do so, Sir." The minister flatly replied, "You can't? Then go home now." At that time, my mother could not have correctly understood the head minister's true intention behind those words. Yet there was no way she would return to her hospital in defeat, she decided. She forced herself outside to the firewood, literally gasping for air. She shut her eyes and swung the ax straight down on one piece of wood. And behold! The wood made a sound and broke into two pieces.

This delighted my mother immensely, helping her forget the pain in her chest. When she returned to the worship hall, she found the minister who had given her the task, praying to *Kami*, our Divine Parent, in front of Kami's altar with his forehead tightly pressed to the *tatami*-mat floor. After a while, he returned to his Mediation seat, and said to my mother in a gentle voice, "Let's practice faith together!" This was how we, as a family, began following the Konko Faith.

"The Konko Faith Is our Family Treasure."

Even as we practiced faith, we still came across various difficulties along the way. Yet we asked for and received Sacred Mediation at the Konko church every day, and by doing so, we all were allowed to overcome the shortcomings in our hearts, frailties of our health and financial hardships that we faced. Thanks to *Kami's* blessings and our total commitment our faith, our lives were saved and our mother, who all but lost her life due to her critical illness and emotional despair, became healthy and energetic again, physically and mentally.

Since then, my mother has always said, "The Konko Faith is our family treasure. This is very important to us all," and she found her greatest delight whenever she heard that someone was saved through faith. As we all grew up and became independent of our mother, she lived by herself. Yet she was not alone. She always seemed to have someone visit her. Whenever I heard that she had a visitor, I felt peace and gratitude in my heart. And I am always mindful of this thought, "The Konko Faith is such a wonderful religion." My mother lived until she turned 88, and I feel that she died a happy death five years ago. I know she was a happy, contented person, because she never finished a day without saying, "Thank you very much!"

When they learned of their grandmother's passing, one of her grandchildren said, "Grandma is smiling!" And we reassured them, "Head Minister of our church and other church members who passed away before grandma must have come to greet her! How blessed we should feel!" With a feeling of happiness and appreciation we were able to bid farewell to our mother.

This year, we are planning to hold the 5th year memorial service for our mother. People close to her and even her great grandchildren will get together for the service. I am deeply happy and thankful for this. I sense that my feeling of gratitude is growing as days go by. I receive *Kami's* blessings and live my life happily everyday. It is wonderful for me, but I know this is not enough. I know I should interact with people I meet much more, and share my experiences of divine blessings with them so that they will be guided to a happier life with faith in *Kami*. I am determined to speak to people daily, even to total strangers, about *Kami's* divine blessings. I will not be doing this alone, for before speaking, I never fail to direct my heart to *Kami* and pray.

Never Forgetting the Kindness I received from *Kami*

Upon my marriage to a minister serving at Konko Church of Iyoshi, my mother often said to me, "When the father of your fiancé, Oya Sensei, the Head Minister of the Iyoshi church, visited us at our house, I asked him if they were fine with you for their daughter in law." He replied, "Yes." Then I continued, "I am sincerely happy and grateful for your sincere acceptance of my daughter into your family. My daughter is not the healthiest girl in the world, and because of this, I would humbly like to place her on a *sanbo*, the small wooden stand used for offerings, and dedicate her to the benefit of your family and the Iyoshi church." Probably because of my mother's sincere prayers to our Divine Parent about me, I've been allowed to serve at Konko Church of Iyoshi, although I am somewhat fragile physically.

The most important tenet of my faith in our Parent Deity is, "All through my life, I will never forget the kindness, favor and blessings that *Kami* has given me." If my family had not met the Konko Faith (*Konkokyo*), I would not be here now. I live each day of my life, deeply considering how I can pay back what I owe to our Divine Parent.

I pray that I am able to let more people know the Konko Faith, telling them this true story about my mother and myself, sharing how both of us were saved, thanks to this religion. I hope I can create peaceful places in this world and together, with the efforts of *Konkokyo* believers, widen and extend those spaces, spreading our faith. I hope and pray that I can build a road for future generations of Konko believers to travel on and together, with our strong faith, further extend its reaches, so we can share with others the joy of the Konko Faith. This spiritual road we will construct will hopefully last for tens of thousands of years. I, however, cannot accomplish this holy mission alone. With your great help, I would like to spread the Konko Faith to as many people as I can. I acknowledge that this is a sacred *goyo*, a selfless service, that *Kami* has entrusted to me.